

EXPORT DUTY ON SAW LOGS.

The following letter has been published in the *Montreal Gazette*:

SIR.—The unanimity with which an increase of the export duty on saw logs is approved by the press and the people of Canada is most gratifying—the only question in the matter being whether the present is an opportune time for making the increase, now that the Government of the United States is considering the propriety of removing duties from lumber, some fearing that it might be looked upon as an unfriendly act towards the people of the United States. The fact is, no greater mistake can be imagined than this, for the people of the United States, with the single exception of the few lumbermen, are all in favor of free lumber, and would be delighted at any legislation that would tend to make the United States lumbermen let go their grip. The United States lumbermen are looked upon by the people generally as a greedy set of cormorants, who have no thought but their own interests, and who will use any means, however despicable, to carry out their aims.

The *New York Nation*, one of the most respectable papers published in the country, said of them in 1883, on the subject of the tariff on lumber:—

"The duty was placed upon Canadian lumber in the interests of the Northwestern lumbermen. It benefited no other class, and was desired in no other section.

The country is not without words of warning in regard to the dangers which threaten the forests; they have been spoken far and wide. In the meantime we continue to take \$2 from the pocket of every man using a thousand feet of pine or spruce lumber, and hand it over to the manufacturers as a bounty to induce them to destroy the forests more rapidly. It is natural then that the manufacturers resist any attempt to have this duty removed. They will make a still more determined fight to prevent it. They are bold, rich and united. They are actuated by a single purpose—to convert the greatest amount of forest into the largest amount of money in the shortest possible time. Their organization is perfect. They control legislatures and elect members of Congress; they own Governors and Senators. They know what they want and they mean to have it at any cost, and without any regard to the future welfare of the country. It will take something stronger than the tariff commission to make them let go their grip upon the people. We repeat, the tariff upon lumber is a premium on the devastation of the country, and should be repealed without delay."

These are the strong words: "They control the legislatures and elect members of Congress; they own Governors and Senators. They know what they want, and they mean to have it at any cost."

We are now regaled with any number of bunkum speeches and resolutions by Senator Frye, of Maine, who is attempting to raise a tempest in a teapot in Washington about the fisheries; and I have no doubt many people think that this doughty Senator is greatly exercised about fish, but it is not free fish but free lumber that is troubling him, and everything is fish that comes to his net, so that he exercising his ingenuity to see how he can kick up a rumpus about fish or anything else to prejudice his people against Canada in order to serve his friends the lumbermen.

Here is what the *New York World* said of this gentleman in 1883, under the heading of the lumber swindle in Congress:

"Mr. Van Wyck, the independent and public spirited Senator from Nebraska, yesterday made an emphatic protest against one particularly outrageous swindle of the tariff. He moved to strike out the whole list of duties on wood and woodenware, and let all these things in duty free. This was a patriotic proposition, and was naturally opposed by . . . who represents the men who are anxious to clear out what is left of the forests of Michigan, and Frye, who represents the men who are anxious to clear out what is left of the forests of Maine. These greedy creatures in asking for a duty on lumber or its products, are simply asking for a bounty to be given them for making away with the patri mony of the country," and after show-

ing how rapidly the pine and spruce timber supply was diminishing continues: "How their replacement is to be secured is the problem that does agitate statesmen. The problem that does agitate statesmen of the school of . . . and of Frye is how can the rest of the forest be most speedily and effectually cleared, and a bounty for clearing them, in the form of a duty upon the competing product of Canada, is the device formed by these statesmen for that end. . . . Mr. . . . of Michigan, and Mr. Frye, of Maine, think it better that their lumbering constituents should have large profits and quick returns than that the next generation should have any timber to cut. But there is no reason why other Senators should not deem it more important that the forests should be preserved than that . . . and Frye should continue to adorn the Senate by dint of grinding the axes of their timber cutting constituents."

So we see that Mr. Frye's fishery interest is of a somewhat fishy character. If we wish to assist the people of the United States to have the duties removed from Canadian lumber we must make the United States lumbermen who have timber properties in Canada alike interested with ourselves in this matter, and even Col. Jeffers, with his 2,000 million feet of Canadian pine, when he finds that he must either saw his logs in Canada and pay \$2 per 1,000 United States duty like the rest of us, or contribute largely to the Canadian treasury in case his patriotism is so much superior to self-interest that he will in any event take the logs over and saw them in Michigan, might weaken slightly in his patriotism; for I have always observed that patriotism and \$2 per 1,000 on Canadian lumber were strong cards with United States lumbermen. It would be most unjust to suppose that the \$2,000,000 advantage Col. Jeffers would enjoy in taking over his two thousand millions of timber to be sawn in Michigan, could have any influence in arousing his patriotism. Put the export duty on saw logs up to \$4 per thousand feet, and in less than a week I will warrant you will find governor, colonels and the whole army of Michigan lumbermen who are in Canadian timber lands down at Washington, as active in urging Congress to remove the duties from lumber as they are now persistent in having them retained.

That the fiscal arrangements of Canada had resulted in ruining the saw mill interests of the north shore of Lake Erie was bad enough in itself, but to be laughed at for our folly by those gentlemen who had made their millions out of our timber by towing it over to Buffalo and Tonawanda, N. Y., leaving us the pine stumps alone remaining in evidence of the wealth of timber lost to the country, is by no means a pleasant reflection, but which is fully deserved if we allow this pernicious system to continue any longer.

Congressman lumberman Fisher, of Michigan, speaks right to the point when he says:—"As soon as we attempt anything of that sort (meaning towing over logs to Michigan), up will go the export duty on logs to \$3 or \$4 a thousand feet. They (the Canadians) would not let us rob them any more than we would not let them rob us." Unfortunately this is exactly what we have been allowing them to do for the past twenty years on Lake Erie, and this they fancy we will continue to do, thinking, no doubt, that we have not spirit enough or intelligence enough to know our own interests.

Since my former communication to the *Gazette* on this subject, members of Parliament have written to me asking that requisitions be sent in, and that they were sure the Government would act at once in this matter in the manner indicated by me, as it was directly in accord with the Government policy, yet it appears to me that the disadvantages under which the Canadian lumberman has to work when competing with the United States lumberman manufacturing Canadian saw logs are so self-evident, that I am sure it is only necessary to call the attention of the Government to the facts to have matters put right.

I am, dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM LITTLE.

Forestry Chambers, Montreal, May 17th.

CHANGES IN THE LUMBER BUSINESS.

As showing the wonderful changes in the lumber business, brought about by improved transportation and the development of new fields of operation, the following points given by the *Manufacturer's Gazette* are interesting and suggestive. One of the largest owners of Aroostook pine timber lands, and also one of the largest manufacturers of that fine grade of soft pine, informs us that the prices of high grade pine lumber are lower to-day than they were thirty-five years ago. This manufacturer runs several mills in St. John, N. B., and commenced his business there in 1851, when Aroostook pine lumber was in great demand, and met with ready sale at \$45 for No. 1s and 2s at St. John, \$35 for planing 3s, \$22 for planing 4s, \$16 for shippers, \$10 for poor 4s, and \$4 per thousand for scoots. Now it is difficult to realize these prices, and the principal grades are offering to day at \$2 to \$3 per M less than they sold for in 1851. This is partly due to the fact that the Aroostook lumbermen still get out pine logs of various lengths while the market here demands the even lengths and even widths which are furnished by the Canadian and Michigan mills. Again the railroad transportation is such that lumber may be frequently shipped from Michigan to interior New England points, or even to Boston, cheaper than it can be shipped from St. John to Boston, the latter by vessel. No doubt if our St. John friends would manufacture their pine of even lengths and even widths, its superior quality would enable them to secure as much or even more than the market affords the Michigan and Canadian lumbermen. The supply available of good pine on the Aroostook is very small compared with what it was years ago, but the market for lumber appears to have run away from it, and there is plenty of pine to be found in other sections to take its place. No pine has ever come to this market which rivalled the Aroostook pine in its soundness and valuable qualities for fine work. In judging of the lumber business one cannot confine his vision to a single state or a single river, but must take the whole continent in view, and bear in mind that the railroads and canals have made wonderful changes in the facility for transporting lumber from one section to another. The lumber famines which are frequently predicted by some of the forestry orators, will hardly come during the present generation. True, some sections are being rapidly depleted of their timber growth, but others are yet undeveloped by reason of the lack of the necessary transportation facilities. The enterprise and push of the lumbermen is constantly reaching out into unexplored territories and utilizing the virgin forests, hitherto a sealed book to the wood-chopper and the lumberman.

CUTTING PRICES.

The ill effects of such a course as cutting prices are attracting attention in the United States. According to the *Bulletin*, "Probably the most prevalent vice in the mercantile world is that of cutting below recognized and established values in order to get ahead of competitors, which is the worst habit that business men can adopt, as it involves a principle which, if persisted in, must result in bankruptcy." The first cut is, frequently, the first logical step to the calling of a meeting of creditors. When a tradesman begins to undersell, he has no idea of overstepping the bounds of moderation; but the great trouble is that moderation in the cutting of prices is the most difficult thing to define. "Commencing by just a shade below regular prices, the cutting propensity grows and grows, until the slightest shade above cost is reached, and in not a few cases bargains have been closed on the hard pan basis of cost itself, while in some instances the pruning process cuts even below it. Now, what is the inevitable result of all this? Why, simply, a resort to the dishonest practice of supplying an inferior article in place of the one sold, in order to make a profit."

If, says the *American Storekeeper*, two or more merchants in the same town, or at competing points, cannot agree like men to stop cutting and to sell staples at a living profit, it will pay any one of them to stop the senseless

practice short off, and to step out, alone, if need be, in the path of keeping store for money. No live storekeeper need be forced into "marking down" by the unbusinesslike example of his competitors. There are other ways of keeping trade. Customers whose patronage is worth having are bright enough to appreciate, when told, that they cannot get something for nothing, and that the merchant who pretends to deal with them on that basis has sinister desires upon their pocketbooks. It is better to stop cutting and unprofitable selling by consent and agreement, and an effort to establish such an understanding is advisable, but it is well to stop it anyway.

SUCCESSFUL SALESMAN.

The successful salesman of lumber, or of any other commodity, must have a good many inherent qualities. Primarily he must be a worker. Steadfast industry, even if it results in "main strength and awkwardness," will often accomplish a good deal. He must in some manner bring himself to the point of telling his customer the truth, at least about the article he is selling. If needs be to keep himself at a natural moral level, he can lie about anything else under the sun save the goods he is selling. Deceit in this particular won't do, and it is the very thing that makes more failures among salesmen than anything else. The salesman's ambition should be to secure for himself and the house he represents the esteem and confidence of his trade. This much done his avocation is easy, and his success sure. The weakness of salesmen is to overrate the quality of the goods they are handling, and they thus succeed in disappointing a customer in such a way that it is almost impossible to ever secure another order from him. Meals and bed-time at best are at very irregular hours with the average traveller, but he should make them as regular as possible. "Painting the town red" at night and attempting to do business next day won't do. If a salesman has customers that renders going out and getting drunk a necessity to the continuance of their patronage, it's a line of trade that will hurt his house in the end. It will not only hurt his house but will ruin him, and the sooner he abandons it the better. The successful salesman must be careful of his credits. Don't sell a man a bill of goods if his credit does not appear right. Your opportunity of "sizing up" your customer's business methods and condition is much better than your principal's, and if you exercise discretion in your sales your judgment will be relied on. The salesman, whose house "stands at his back and swears by him" and his transactions is on a much better road to success than the man whose every transaction is scrutinized with distrust, and whose judgment is questioned. Again, if your house allows you some leeway in the matter of prices, don't have your order book filled with prices at the lowest notch at which you can sell. Keep yourself posted on values. And, again, aim at all times to sell, not what your customer may ask you for, but what your house has for sale—keep posted on your stock, and always crowd the "slow sellers" and hang on to the class of goods that sell themselves. For example, any chump can go out on the road and sell a lot of wide, good boards, but it takes a salesman to place cull Norway boards when a man thinks he can use nothing but white pine, or to sell him 14 feet lengths, when he swears he won't buy anything but 16's; or 10 inch stock when he wants 12. But it can be done, and a stock left in a good, unbroken condition all through the year, and a successful salesman can do it.—*Northwestern Lumberman.*

Trade With British Columbia.

The *Herald* of Vancouver, B. C., the new city on the Pacific coast, in its issue of April 30th says:—

"The works of the Royal City Planing Mill Co. here are progressing rapidly towards completion. The engine and boilers, together with part of the machinery, arrived this week. This was sent from the Hamilton Machine Works, Peterborough, Ontario."

The mill men of Maine have taken preliminary steps towards forming a state organization.